



**HAPPY TRAILS**  
**FARM ANIMAL SANCTUARY**

**VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**

## **Welcome!**

Congratulations on your decision to become a volunteer at Happy Trails Farm Animal Sanctuary, Inc.! We hope this will be a rewarding experience for you, and we welcome you to the team.

The sanctuary is run entirely on private donations supplemented by funding brought in through tours and gift shop sales, animal sponsorships, quarterly newsletters and grants from organizations and family foundations.

The operation of our facilities is very costly, and the organization relies heavily on an active volunteer program to help offset labor expenses. Your volunteerism is key to providing a comfortable and safe existence for the rescued animals. There are many volunteer opportunities, from non-physical to labor-intensive projects – all connected and equally important to the success of our mission.

## **Our Mission**

**Happy Trails Farm Animal Sanctuary, Inc. rescues, rehabilitates and re-homes criminally abused, neglected and abandoned farm animals.**

**Rescue** – working in cooperation with law enforcement and county humane organizations, we provide our service to Ohio and any state beyond requesting assistance.

**Rehabilitation** – providing the veterinary attention, nutrition and maintenance care and nurture to each animal who enters the sanctuary.

**Re-home** – networking to find loving and forever homes for each animal based on the best match of people, personalities and facilities.

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## I. PHYSICAL LABOR

Volunteers play a major role in the cleanliness and upkeep of the animals' environment, shelters and yards, as well as the sanctuary grounds. Volunteers take responsibility for mucking out animal shelters and providing fresh bedding; raking and clearing manure from the yards; scrubbing water and feed buckets; putting up hay and straw; mending fences, barns and shelters; painting; maintaining the pet cemetery; and transporting animals.

## II. NON-PHYSICAL OPPORTUNITIES

Non-physical volunteer opportunities include soliciting donations; planning fundraisers and special events; assisting our tour guides; working in the gift shop; administrative tasks; distributing newsletters and event fliers; craft projects and occasional research projects to benefit the sanctuary.

## III. SCHEDULING YOUR VOLUNTEER TIME

New volunteers will work with the volunteer coordinator to schedule their weekly volunteer shift. Please commit to at least three (3) hours per week. Volunteers are welcome and encouraged to sign up for additional hours if time allows on a week-by-week basis. Any volunteer not able to fulfill a weekly time/day commitment is encouraged to explore other volunteer opportunities with Happy Trails Farm Animal Sanctuary, Inc. that do not require a weekly commitment.

## IV. VOLUNTEER UPDATES/PERSONAL TOURS

The volunteer coordinator will communicate special project needs via email. Please be sure to provide an email address on your volunteer application. You can also sign up via our website to receive sanctuary

updates at [happytrailsfarm.org](http://happytrailsfarm.org). Our weekly mass email, as well as our Facebook page, are a great source of information. As a volunteer we hope you are proud to help share these updates with family and friends. Quarterly newsletters are published to update all of our supporters, volunteers and staff of our accomplishments as an organization.

We encourage volunteers to spread the word of our mission and welcome friends and family. All personal tours must be pre-approved by the executive director or the volunteer coordinator and must follow tour protocol and guidelines.

## V. VOLUNTEER SIGN-IN & HOURS

Prior to your shift, the volunteer board in the volunteer lounge must be checked for important information, such as rule changes, scheduled events, special projects, etc. Volunteers must physically sign in/out on the volunteer sign-in sheet located in the volunteer lounge, as well as verbally check in/out with the caregiver staff member to receive work assignments. The caregiver staff member for each shift is responsible to track a volunteer's progress. It is important to sign in/out as accurately as possible, as volunteer hours are tracked for use in grant proposals. The national average value placed on volunteer hours is \$24.14 per hour! ([independentsector.org](http://independentsector.org))

## VI. CALL OFF/LEAVE OF ABSENCE

To call off from a scheduled shift, please alert the volunteer coordinator by email at [volunteer@happytrailsfarm.org](mailto:volunteer@happytrailsfarm.org) as well as a text/phone call to the scheduled caregiver staff member. A 24-hour notice is required if at all possible as this will allow time for a replacement to be found. A volunteer must work with the volunteer coordinator to be granted a temporary leave of absence or a period of reduced activity, for good cause (illness, travel, etc.). These instances are managed by the volunteer coordinator on a case-by-case basis.

## VII. FIREARMS

Weapons are not permitted on Happy Trails Farm Animal Sanctuary, Inc. premises, at enterprise sponsored functions, or in Happy Trails Farm Animal Sanctuary, Inc. owned or leased vehicles. For the purpose of this policy, Happy Trails Farm Animal Sanctuary, Inc. premises include all enterprise-owned or leased buildings and surrounding areas such as parking lots, sidewalks and driveways, **except where specifically exempted by law.**

## VIII. SMOKING/ALCOHOL/DRUGS

Happy Trails Farm Animal Sanctuary, Inc. maintains a NO SMOKING policy. Due to the fire hazard that an open flame presents in an environment filled with straw, hay and wood, smoking is not permitted on or near the sanctuary grounds.

Absolutely no alcohol or drugs are allowed on the property at any time. No person shall enter the premises after having consumed any alcoholic beverages or narcotics. Any person believed to be impaired due to alcohol or drugs will be removed from the property.

## IX. VEGAN POLICY

"In line with Happy Trails Farm Animal Sanctuary Inc.'s (HTFAS) mission to rescue, rehabilitate and re-home criminally abused and neglected farm animals—and out of respect for the animals in our care—all foods served at events and fundraisers solely sponsored, organized and staffed by HTFAS will be vegan and plant-based to the best of our ability. However, because HTFAS respects all individuals and organizations who support our mission, as well as the humane treatment of animals and good husbandry practices, we welcome involvement from all those who want to volunteer, donate or partner for the benefit of the animals we serve."

A best-faith effort is expected that all foods consumed on the sanctuary grounds will be vegan.

## X. DRESS CODE

Volunteers are visible to guests at all times while on the property and should dress accordingly. Long pants are recommended, but shorts are acceptable at mid-thigh length or below. Spaghetti strap or strapless tops are not permitted. Logo shirts are required when working events unless otherwise specified (as a volunteer you will receive a 20% discount on all logo items and apparel). Closed-toe shoes or boots are required to be worn at all times. We discourage dangling earrings or expensive, shiny jewelry as the feathered friends are attracted to these items.

Volunteers may get wet, muddy or dirty while working. A spare set of clothing kept handy is suggested. Rain boots are encouraged during the rainy season, and muck boots or cold-weather boots and heavy overalls are recommended during winter months. Safety glasses are recommended/available for manual labor as well as dust masks for cleaning shelters and stalls (located in the volunteer lounge).

## XI. SOCIAL MEDIA & MEDIA CONTACT

Any event or inquiry from the news media that affects or is likely to affect the overall reputation of Happy Trails Farm Animal Sanctuary, Inc. must be routed to the executive director or his or her designee.

If a volunteer's social networking includes any information related to Happy Trails Farm Animal Sanctuary, Inc., the volunteer must not represent in any way that the volunteer is speaking on behalf of Happy Trails Farm Animal Sanctuary, Inc., unless the volunteer is otherwise authorized to do so. If any of your activity creates a risk that a third party may believe you are acting on behalf of Happy Trails Farm Animal Sanctuary, Inc., you must use an appropriate disclaimer such as: "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of Happy Trails."

## XII. SOLICITATION

Persons who are not employed by Happy Trails Farm Animal Sanctuary, Inc. may not solicit or distribute literature on Happy Trails Farm Animal Sanctuary, Inc.'s premises at any time without the expressed approval of the executive director or his or her designee. Employees are prohibited from distributing, circulating, or posting (on bulletin boards, refrigerators, walls, etc.) literature, petitions or other materials at any time for any purpose without the prior approval of the executive director or his or her designee.

## XIII. CODE OF CONDUCT

At Happy Trails Farm Animal Sanctuary, Inc., we foster a team environment. Rumor control is everyone's responsibility. The spreading of inappropriate information to fellow volunteers or to the public will not be tolerated. This includes excessive questioning of the judgment or actions of staff members, executive director and/or the board of directors. Any issues, concerns or grievances of volunteers should be addressed in person or in writing to the volunteer coordinator. Every effort will be made to achieve resolution.

As a volunteer you are an ambassador of Happy Trails Farm Animal Sanctuary, Inc. Whether on the property, at an event or at an outreach opportunity you are representing the organization. With this in mind, please dress appropriately, refrain from using offensive language and please be considerate of our mission.

In the event a question is posed and you do not know the answer, please advise the supporter that you will find the answer with an "I don't know, but let's find the answer". Responding in this manner will help to dispel incorrect information regarding our mission, our beliefs and/or our actions as this can be harmful to the success of the organization.

## XIV. ACCESS TO THE PROPERTY

Volunteers will have access to the sanctuary main gates. Do NOT allow access to the property to anyone without proper training. If you do not recognize someone on the property as a volunteer or staff member, it is appropriate to introduce yourself and politely ask, "May I help you?" Due to the nature of cruelty cases with which the organization is involved, it is not unheard of to find unauthorized visitors on the property. Explain that they must be escorted by a volunteer or staff member at all times, guide them to the gift shop and alert a staff member. No person shall enter the property beyond the mid-gate without having completed a "Release & Hold Harmless Agreement."

## XV. GATES AND DOORS

Upon approaching a gate that is shut, you must shut it and latch it exactly as you found it after traveling through the gate. Upon approaching and traveling through a gate that is open, you must leave it open. Do not allow any animals to follow you through a gate, with exception of our sanctuary cats.

Note: Please always assume that any wire or white rope fencing is electrified. Do your best to make any visitors aware of this as well.

## XVI. HORSE PROTOCOL

Volunteers are NEVER permitted to enter an area where horses are turned out unless instructed by a caregiver staff member. Do not walk into the middle of a group of horses. Do not walk into a stall containing a horse or other animal unless instructed and/or supervised by a caregiver staff member.

## XVII. ANIMAL INTERACTION/TREATS

Volunteers are prohibited to enter animal enclosures without express permission and/or training from a caregiver staff member. This is for the

safety of volunteers as well as the rescued animals. Many of the animals have special needs and training issues due to neglect.

Volunteers are prohibited from feeding any animals. All donated treats from the public must be looked over by a caregiver staff member. This is for the safety of the rescued animals, as any animal may be on a closely monitored diet, on medications for health issues and/or unable to tolerate certain food groups due to its species. It is NEVER acceptable for a volunteer to feed any pig by hand.

No animal shall ever be moved from its present shelter, area or enclosure without the express consent of the caregiver staff member in charge of the shift.

## XVIII. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

All volunteers are responsible for proper disposal of personal trash, as well as that of guests or other volunteers. Recycle containers are provided for aluminum cans and plastic bottles in the volunteer lounge. When a volunteer completes a project, he or she must clean and put away all tools, excess materials and debris. Please take the time to pick up trash. We want to be respectful of our and the animals' environment, good stewards of the Earth and good neighbors to our friends who live near the sanctuary.

## XIX. EQUIPMENT

All tools, supplies and equipment entrusted to a volunteer must be put away in the proper place upon completion of the task/project. Any supplies while in use, such as paint trays, paint brushes, sharp tools, etc. are not to be left on the ground or in reach of any animals.

If a volunteer discovers a necessary repair, or if a tool or piece of equipment is damaged, this should be reported to a staff member who will alert the facilities manager.

## XX. PERSONAL SAFETY/ILLNESS

No person shall run or horseplay on the property. With unpredictable northeast Ohio weather, the ground can quickly become slippery, muddy or icy. Take extra precaution as the terrain is difficult to navigate.

Should a health issue, such as a bee sting, spider bite or other injury occur while at Happy Trails Farm Animal Sanctuary, Inc., it is required that the issue be reported to the volunteer coordinator and/or a staff member immediately. An incident report must be filled out at the time of the incident.

Heavy machinery and vehicles, such as the bobcat, excavator, dump truck, and logo truck and horse trailers are often being driven on the property at Happy Trails Farm Animal Sanctuary, Inc. Each of these vehicles or pieces of heavy machinery have the right of way. Proceed with caution when walking near them or behind them and/or in their blind spots.

## XXI. INFRACTION/DISMISSAL

The above policies and Code of Conduct apply to all volunteers, staff and guests while on the property. Each person is responsible to abide by and enforce these policies and the Code of Conduct. Any infraction of the policies or Code of Conduct must be brought to the violator's attention and/or to the attention of a staff member. Disciplinary action may be taken at the discretion of the volunteer coordinator or executive director, including verbal or written warning or suspension.

Happy Trails Farm Animal Sanctuary, Inc. retains the right to permanently excuse anyone from the volunteer program or from the property if his or her conduct is deemed unbecoming, unacceptable or unsafe for a volunteer representing Happy Trails Farm Animal Sanctuary, Inc.

If you have any questions regarding any of the policy guidelines listed above, please contact your volunteer coordinator or the executive director. Revised January 25, 2018. Approved by the Happy Trails Farm Animal Sanctuary, Inc. Board of Directors. All revisions approved and noted in BOD minutes.

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NOTES:



## Volunteer Handbook Acknowledgement

I have read and understand the policies and procedures for Happy Trails Farm Animal Sanctuary, Inc., and agree to abide by all rules and regulations. I understand that failure to comply with these policies could be grounds for dismissal.

The volunteer handbook is made available online at [happytrailsfarm.org](http://happytrailsfarm.org). A hardcopy of said handbook will be provided upon request.

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PRINTED NAME

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VOLUNTEER SIGNATURE

DATE

**HAPPY TRAILS FARM ANIMAL SANCTUARY, INC.**